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ABSTRACT

This bulletin provides guidelines to Missouri educators concerning inclusion of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments of school achievement as required under Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act and the reauthorization of the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. It stresses the greater focus on accountability for educational services provided to students with disabilities. The five questions and answers address the following topics: (1) reasons for requiring students with disabilities to participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and district-wide assessments; (2) decisions of the individualized education program (IEP) team concerning a student's involvement in assessments; (3) assessments included in the MAP; (4) assessments that must be considered at the district level; and (5) factors that IEP teams need to consider in deciding about a student's participation and accommodation in assessment. An inset lists eligibility criteria for participation in MAP-A and a table lists accommodation codes for IEP students. (Contains references.) (DB)

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Technical Assistance Bulletin

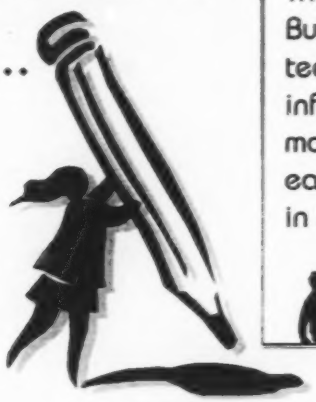
January 2001

from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Special Education

Issues in EDUCATION

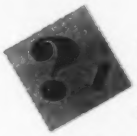
State & District-wide Assessments of School Achievement

What IEP team members need to know...



This Technical Assistance Bulletin will provide IEP team members with the information they need to make decisions about each child's participation in these assessments.

Both the passage of Missouri's Outstanding Schools Act (OSA) and the Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 have called for a greater focus on the accountability of educational services for students with disabilities. The Missouri School Improvement Program (MSIP), which accredits school districts in Missouri, uses the performance of ***all*** students on the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) subject area assessments as one measure of performance. The Division of Special Education has identified the performance of students with disabilities on the MAP as one of its Performance Goals as required by IDEA. This focus on educational achievement and outcomes for students with disabilities is intended to direct attention to the accommodations and supports needed by students with disabilities to access and progress in the general education curriculum. Participation in state and district-wide assessments goes hand in hand with access to the general education curriculum.



Why are students with disabilities required to participate in the Missouri Assessment Program and district-wide assessments of student achievement?

Participation of students with disabilities in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement is required by a number of state and federal laws and regulations. But more importantly, it sets the expectation that students with disabilities can achieve the standards that have been established for all students. Participation in these assessments should lead to improved teaching and learning. Participation of students with disabilities will also allow local district administrators and boards of education to consider the needs of all students when they make instructional decisions and set policy (i.e., curriculum adoptions, staffing patterns, professional development). It is important to expect students with disabilities to meet the high standards and expectations that have been set for all students using the accommodations and supports provided by special education. It is also

important to remember that the majority of students with disabilities identified under IDEA do not have significant cognitive disabilities which would inhibit their ability to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

2 *In general, what decisions does the IEP team have to make regarding a student's involvement in state and district-wide assessments?*

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must make decisions about how students with disabilities participate in assessment programs. These decisions include whether a student will participate in all six subject area assessments or the alternate assessment that comprise the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP). When making the decision about participation in the MAP subject area assessments, the IEP team must also consider the student's need for accommodations. If they decide that the MAP subject area assessments are not appropriate for an individual student, even with the use of accommodations, then they can consider the student's eligibility for the MAP-Alternate (MAP-A).

The IEP must address the same considerations for district-wide assessments of student achievement. If the IEP team determines that a child will not participate in a district-wide assessment (or a part of an assessment), the IEP must state why the assessment is not appropriate and how the child will be assessed.

In making these decisions, the IEP team has the responsibility and authority to determine the individual accommodations that a student needs to support and ensure his or her participation in state and district-wide assessments of student achievement. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or local school districts cannot limit the authority of an IEP team in the selection of accommodations.

If a specific accommodation is not on the list of accommodations in the Examiner's manual, the accommodation can still be used. See question 5 for further information about documentation of these decisions. All accommodation decisions made by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP.

It is critical that IEP teams have the knowledge and expertise needed to make these important team decisions. Districts seeking resources for training can contact the Effective Practices section of DESE at (573) 751-0187.

3 *What assessments are included in the MAP?*

MAP subject assessments are given in the following six subject areas and at the grades indicated in parentheses:

1. Mathematics (4, 8, and 10)
2. Science (3, 7, and 10)
3. Communication Arts (3, 7, and 11)
4. Social Studies (4, 8, and 11)
5. Health/Physical Education (5 and 9)
6. Fine Arts (5)

Students with disabilities must take all of the MAP subject area assessments (or portions of each subject area assessment as determined by the IEP team) ***or*** the MAP-A. Students may not participate in ***some*** of the subject area assessments ***and*** the MAP-A. This policy is based on the Office of Special Education Programs' (OSEP) Memorandum 0024, which is referenced at the end of this document.

The MAP-A has been developed to allow ***all*** students with disabilities to participate in the State Assessment Program. The MAP-A is designed for the student whose educational program centers on the functional application of the Show-Me Standards. The student's IEP team must agree that the student meets all five of the criteria outlined in the eligibility checklist for MAP-A. These criteria are listed on page 3. The MAP-A is administered to eligible children who are 9, 13, or 17 years of age. It is expected that no more than 1 to 2 percent of the total district enrollment at a specific grade level would participate in the MAP-A. Thus, if a district has approximately 500 students enrolled at each elementary grade, no more than 5 to 10 students would be expected to participate in MAP-A at age 9.

Eligibility Criteria for MAP-A

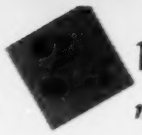
The five criteria that a student with a disability must meet to be eligible for MAP-A are:

1. The student has significant problems acquiring new skills, and acquisition of skills must be taught in very small steps.
2. The student does not keep pace with peers, even with the majority of students in special education, with respect to the total number of skills acquired.
3. The student's educational program centers on the functional application of the Missouri Show-Me Standards.
4. The IEP team, as documented in the IEP, does not recommend participation in the MAP subject areas, or taking the MAP with accommodations.
5. The student's inability to participate in the MAP subject area assessments is not primarily the result of excessive absences; visual or auditory disabilities; or social, cultural, language, or economic differences.

What assessments must be considered at the district level?

District-wide assessments include those assessments that are part of the district assessment program used to determine levels of student achievement. Districts should provide IEP teams with a list of the district-wide assessments administered in their districts and the grades at which they are administered so the IEP team can make participation decisions. If an IEP team determines that a particular district-wide assessment (or a part of that assessment) is not appropriate for an individual student, the IEP team must document in the IEP why the assessment is not appropriate and how the student will be assessed.

When determining alternative assessment methods for district-wide assessments, the IEP team must consider the purpose of the district-wide assessment and make sure the alternate method of assessment will produce a comparable purpose. In other words, if the purpose of the district-wide assessment is to assess reading ability, the alternative method must also result in an assessment of the student's reading ability. DESE has considered the option for districts to use the MAP-A as an alternate to a district-wide assessment of student achievement. Because the MAP-A assesses the functional application of the Show-Me Standards, it has been determined that the MAP-A could not be an appropriate alternate to a district-wide assessment of student achievement.



What do IEP teams need to know in order to make decisions about a student's participation and accommodations in an effective manner?

It is important that IEP teams know how each of the three sessions of the MAP subject assessments have been constructed and what skills students will need to take the test. One session is multiple choice and requires students to "bubble in" their answers. The constructed response and performance event sessions require written responses. Being familiar with the nature of the assessment items on the MAP and district-wide assessments will assist teams in making decisions about accommodations. DESE has a number of "released" assessment questions that IEP teams can review to assist them in making these decisions. More information can also be found on DESE's web site: www.dese.state.mo.us/divinstr/curriculum/releaseditems.

Each IEP team must determine what accommodations, if any, the student needs in order to participate in the state or district-wide assessment. The purpose of an accommodation is to "level the playing field" so that a student with a disability can demonstrate what he knows and is able to do. The IEP team has the responsibility to determine needed accommodations.

Typically, the accommodations needed by students with disabilities in a testing environment are also used by students in their instructional program. IEP teams need to be sensitive to the use of accommodations and involve students, especially older students,

in making accommodation decisions. Districts need to make every attempt to administer accommodations in a sensitive and discreet manner.

Accommodations that are determined necessary by the IEP team must be documented in the IEP and the Special Codes Section (SCS) that is used in the MAP. The state has identified a list of common accommodations that might be needed by students with disabilities. Each of the accommodations has a code that must be documented on the SCS. These codes provide the state with data to answer a variety of questions about the use of accommodations, such as which accommodations are being used by students with disabilities and what percentage of students are using accommodations. Table 1 is an example of the list that was used in the spring 2000 administration of MAP. DESE will work with the MAP test contractor to make changes to this list for the 2001 administration. If an IEP team determines the need for an accommodation that is not on this list, the accommodation must be identified in the IEP and coded as "other" on the SCS.

TABLE 1

Accommodation Codes for IEP Students

Administration Accommodations (Admin)

Code		Code	
01	Braille edition of assessment	08	Audiotaped administration of assessment
02	Large-print edition of assessment	09	Use of assistive device
03	Use of magnifying equipment	10	Using visual aids
04	Oral reading of assessment	11	Other
05	Signing of assessment (directions)		
07	With student using amplification equipment (e.g., hearing aid or auditory trainer)		

Timing Accommodations (Time)

20	Extend time allotted to complete Session 3
23	Administer test using more than three testing periods

Response Accommodations (Resp)

(NOTE: Any use of an alternative response must be converted to a scorable answer sheet.)

30	Use of typewriter for responding	37	Use of brailler
31	Use of computer/word processor for responding	38	Use of communication device
32	Pointing to response	39	Calculator
33	Giving response orally	40	Abacus
34	Giving response in sign language	41	Arithmetic tables
35	Dictation to a scribe	42	Graph paper
36	Student-taped response	44	Other

Setting Accommodations (Set)

50	Testing individually
51	Testing with small group
53	With teacher facing student (hearing-impaired)
54	Other

Can parents request that their child not participate in the MAP or MAP-A? What about nonparticipation requests by parents for district-wide assessments?

All students enrolled in a public or charter school are expected to participate in the MAP. There is no procedure for a parent to request that their child not participate in the MAP. (MAP includes both the subject area assessments and the alternate assessment.)

If the district has a policy and procedure for parents to request that their children not participate in district-wide assessments, then that same procedure must be available to parents of children with disabilities. If no policy exists for parents to request nonparticipation for nondisabled students, then districts may not have a policy for students with disabilities.

Is out-of-grade-level testing allowed in the MAP?

No. In order to provide coherent information about student achievement and attainment of state standards at specific grade levels, out-of-grade-level testing cannot be permitted.

Additional resources

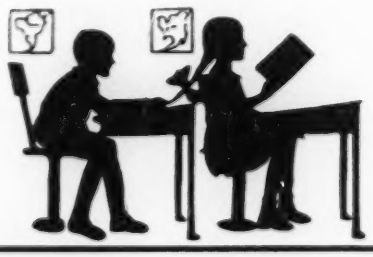
OSEP Memorandum 00-24, *Questions and Answers about Provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 Related to Students with Disabilities and State and District-wide Assessments.* [On-line]. Available: www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP.

Do students with disabilities who score at the Step 1 achievement level have to be retested as required by HB 889?

Yes. There is no language in this state law that allows an exemption for students with disabilities. Under HB 889, all students who score at Step 1 are required to receive remediation activities and retake the MAP. Remediation activities are not required to be documented in the IEP, but IEP services can be used to meet this requirement. Even if a student has received all of the credits necessary for a particular subject area, the requirements of HB 889 must be met. The purpose and focus of the remediation would be to prepare the student for his or her best performance on the MAP. HB 889 does not require these actions for students who are in "Level Not Determined."

Are students who are enrolled in vocational schools, juvenile detention centers, or placed in approved private agencies by local districts required to take the MAP and district-wide assessments?

Yes. The only students who are exempt from state or district-wide assessments under IDEA are those who are students with disabilities convicted as adults under State law and incarcerated in adult prisons.



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What scores are generated by the MAP subject assessments and what impact does the use of accommodations have on these scores?

The MAP subject area assessments generate several scores. Two are especially important to IEP team decision-making:

1. Achievement Level score
2. National Percentile score

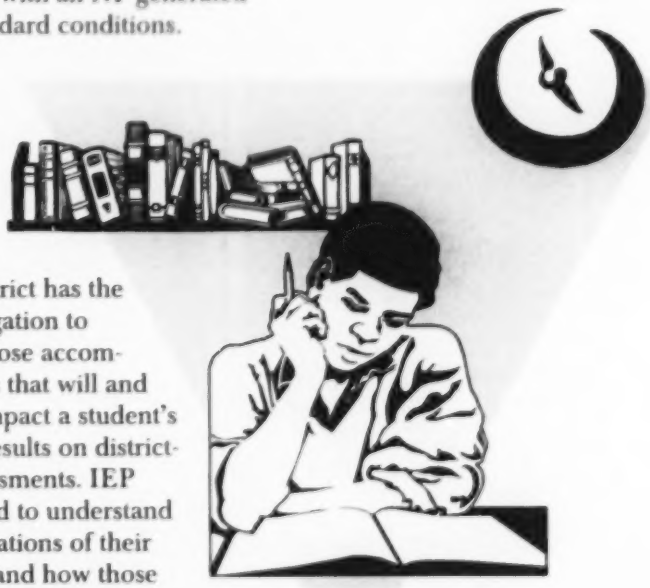
Missouri uses five Achievement Levels to describe a student's performance on the MAP subject assessments:

1. Step 1
2. Progressing
3. Nearing Proficient
4. Proficient
5. Advanced

In order for ***any*** student to generate an Achievement Level score, he or she must attempt at least one response in Session 1, the constructed response session, one response in Session 2, the performance event session, and at least five responses or one correct response in Session 3, the Terra Nova portion, which is often referred to as the multiple choice portion of the test. Students who do not make such response attempts do not generate an Achievement Level score and are counted in a "Level Not Determined" category. Students who take the MAP-A are also counted in the "Level Not Determined" category.

Students who use any accommodations and make the response attempts described above will generate an Achievement Level score on the MAP subject assessments. These scores will be included in the building and district achievement level scores for all students.

The MAP subject area assessments also generate a score that is referred to as a National Percentile (NP). This score is based solely upon the student's performance in Session 3 (the Terra Nova Survey/ multiple choice portion of the assessment). This NP score can be used to compare an individual student's performance with other students in the nation. However, in order to make such a comparison, the student must take this portion of the assessment under the conditions in which the Terra Nova Survey was normed. For example, this portion of the assessment is timed. In order for a student to generate an NP that can be compared with other students, extended time cannot be used as an accommodation. However, if the IEP team determines that extended time is a needed accommodation for this portion of the test, then that extended time is permitted. The IEP team members need to understand that the NP generated under these conditions cannot be interpreted as or compared with an NP generated under standard conditions.



The district has the same obligation to identify those accommodations that will and will not impact a student's score or results on district-wide assessments. IEP teams need to understand the implications of their decisions and how those decisions might impact individual students when considering accommodations for district-wide assessments.

Are there other accommodations that will affect the National Percentile? What are the standard conditions under which the Terra Nova Survey is administered?

The Terra Nova Survey portion of the MAP subject area assessments is administered in a group setting. The survey is a timed test. Students receive directions from a test administrator and then independently complete the test. Standard instructions for administering the Terra Nova Survey can be found in the Test Examiner's manual. IEP team members can access this manual from their district test coordinator. Any administration other than what is described would produce an NP that could not be interpreted as an NP generated under standard conditions.